

Once a Borough ... 1900 - 1930

1900s

Whau Bridge: According to Peter Buffett in the *Western Leader*, 29 August 1985, by the turn of the century a permanent wooden bridge of narrow span crossed the Whau Creek. This was to remain until the 1930s.

Shops:

"The Rosebank Road area: a shop on the site now occupied by the Public Library was operated for much of the period between 1900 and 1950 as a general store. The best known owners were the Fisher family, who had the business in the 1930s." [Challenge of the Whau, p. 88]

1900

On the 5 March 1900, the *NZ Herald* reported on the first Avondale & Waikumete Fruitgrowers Association Show held in the Avondale Public Hall. The show was opened by John Bollard: *"Near 34 years ago he assisted to cut down the tea tree on the present site of the Avondale Hall, and when he then stated that he hoped to see the day when the district would flourish, when there would be a railway running through it, and when they would all reap the fruits of their industry, some of those associated with him simply laughed at the idea."*

Annual Ratepayers meeting, Public Hall, 4 May 1900:

*"Attention being paid to the **open drain** in the centre of the township."*

*"Reference was made to the advancement of the district, recommending **tree planting** on vacant spots in the township and at the Domain at Avondale South."*

Residents had always been concerned about health in the district, but this is the first record of a suggestion to beautify the town.

This was followed in July 1900 by the **Avondale Tree Planting Society** asking the Road Board's permission *"to plant trees on the side of the roads in the district in the vicinity of the village."* The Board gave a subsidy of £12 10/- for the purpose of the planting and erecting guards to protect the trees. The Board was to supervise.

[Minutes, 4/7/1900]

In August 1900, New Lynn residents began to approach the Roads Board asking to be **amalgamated with Avondale**, seceding from Waitemata County. Mr J N Bethell raised points of some confusion as to whether Portage Road was still in the Avondale District (it had been under the Highways District). A Board deputation met New Lynn residents at the Whau Bridge on 11 August for a tour of New Lynn district, which showed that the roads were in poor condition, the length of the main road through New Lynn felt to be too great a burden for the Roads Board to maintain. There were reservations concerning taking on the full cost of maintaining the Whau Bridge.

In the end, New Lynn broke away from Waitemata County in 1910 by

itself to become New Lynn Town District.

In September, the Blake Street footpath (Binsted side, most likely) was formed. [Minutes, 5/9/1900]

In those days, footpaths were formed using hot tar with broken shell thrown over before the tar set. This was to provide better vision (especially at night – white shell reflected gaslight and moonlight), and because the white shell helped reflect the heat better in summer, preventing melting of the tar. [Conversation with Mr E Croft, 19 July 2001]

1901

New Zealand was among the first of the colonies of the British Empire to send troops to the Boer Wars (1899-1902), in fact Prime Minister Richard Seddon offered troops before the war began in October 1899. In February 1901, Avondale feted one of the returning heroes, at a special function in the Public Hall.

On Tuesday evening last an enjoyable social took place in the Avondale Public Hall. The building was tastefully decorated with flags etc., and the usual red, white and blue designs, as a tribute to the guest of the evening, Mr Wright, who has recently returned from the front. Dancing commenced soon after eight, and was continued throughout the evening.

Messrs Armiger & Bollard in the intervals rendered vocal selections. After a tastefully laid-out supper had been dealt with, several toasts were given. The first was proposed by Mr John Bollard, M.H.R., "The King", who was loyally responded

to and drank with musical honours. Others were: "The Guest of the Evening" by Mr Clay, responded to by Mr Wright, who gave an interesting resume of some of his experiences as a soldier of the King; "The Ladies", proposed by Mr Bluck, was responded to by Mr A E Bollard.

Dancing was resumed, and kept up to an early hour. "Auld Lang Syne" terminated a most successful evening.

[NZ Herald, 14/2/1901, from Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]

1902

Avondale Post Office: *"In 1902 Mr Duncan Ingram, now postmaster at Otarahanga, took over the duties, and with the growth of the district the postal service was extended to New Lynn and Green Bay.*

"In the summer and autumn the inward telegram traffic was heavy as the local growers received the normal advices as to the trend of priced for their produce. At this time the population consisted mainly of market gardeners, fruit growers and employees of the brick works. There were comparatively few city workers living there, but when workers' fares were inaugurated on the trains shortly afterwards at a rate of 2/- a week the residential development became more rapid.

"The last two men who combined the duties of stationmaster and postmaster were Mr Joshua Hutchinson and Mr Charles Moon."

[Speech by H. G. R. Mason, Minister of Justice, 19 August 1938]

In September 1902 a new suburban workman's train was

inaugurated between Henderson and Auckland. [*Tracks and Trains Through Henderson*, by David Lowe]

1903

Avondale Hotel: Application was made (to Eden Licensing Committee) for the transfer of the licence in respect to the Avondale Hotel from the widow Mrs Emma Stych to William Baker. Mr O Nicholson (a lawyer and later Mayor of Mt Eden Borough) appeared in support. The police report stated that the house was in good order and well-conducted. The necessary papers being in order, the transfer was granted, and also renewal of William Baker's licence. (He may have been the last licensee) [*NZ Herald*, 2/6/1903]

Page's Building: On March 4 1903, Mr A W Page *"waited on the board with reference to obtaining the permanent levels of the roadway fronting his property, it being his intention to erect a brick building (plans produced) – also to discuss the question of grading and kerbing the footpath."* This was to be one with a false gable façade, composing a dwelling, shop and grain store. The Roads Board approved the work up to the value of 5 guineas, or £5, 5/-. In July, Page offered to pay half the cost of the kerbing. [minutes, Avondale Roads Board 1903]. Two years later, maintenance work by John Lees on the footpath, "tarring and sanding" had been "interfered with before it had been passed by the Board." [Minutes, 6/6/1905]

Tenders were called in advertisements on 21 April, and from April to June, 1903 the Pages building was erected (taken over by

Arthur W Page in August.) The architect was J Currie.

"Yesterday Mr J Currie, architect, received tenders for a brick shop and dwelling-house, to be erected at Avondale, on a site opposite to the hotel, for Mr A W Page, merchant, of Kingsland. The building is to be a 1-storey erection, the shop having a frontage of 40ft, and the grain store a frontage of 50ft. The tender accepted (brickwork only) was that of Mr F Ellisdon, for £875. [NZ Herald, 21/4/1903, from Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]

The "grain-store" may have been the shed beside the store itself, which was later to serve as a plumbing workshop (1930s-1950s) and the first site of Des Ferry's panel-beating business later.

By 5 May 1904, the Roads Board advised the annual meeting of the district's ratepayers, that *"Great improvement had been made to the road in the village, which was warranted by the erection of Page's fine block of buildings."* [minutes, 1904]

In 1906, the building was leased to Bollard and Wood (17/11/06). Ben Bollard and Edward Wood paid off the lease by 1909, and started the "Bollard & Wood" company which lasted until 1922. From 1915, after his father John's death, Ben Bollard took over the family land agent business in Queen Street, and Edward Wood ran the business on his own. Mr Wood was also, in 1904, secretary to the Avondale Minstrels, still surviving as a group from their beginnings in the 1860s. [Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001].

From March to June 1903, **Geddes Terrace** was formed, gravelled and surface drained. In October 1902 Messrs Brown & Geddes subdivided part of allotment 64, the land being surveyed out by surveyor, John Boylan. In March 1903, John McKail Geddes and Herman Brown owned 7 acres and 32 9/10 perches of Allotment 64, between Geddes Tce and Layard St, and part of the land nearing the Great North Road frontage. On 4 March W Boylam C.E. forwarded the plans and specifications for forming Geddes Tce to the Roads Board for their approval, and on 1 July Messrs Brown Barrett & Co announced the completion and applied to the Board to take over the new road, which they did. [Minutes, 1903, and information from Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]]

Geddes Terrace is likely to have been named for the owner of Brown Barrett & Co, Mr. J. McKail Geddes.

By 1 April 1903, Mr Robert Samuel Kirkpatrick had bought Grubb's land and bakery on the north-western corner of Rosebank/Great North Road, and ran **Kirkpatrick's Bakery** there until early 1905. [Minutes, 1903 and 1905]

Robert Samuel Kirkpatrick (1866-1948) was the son of Duncan Kirkpatrick (arrived 1860 from County Antrim, Ireland) and Jane McCaughan, whom he married in Napier. "Sam" Kirkpatrick married Magdalene Webster Grubb of the Avondale baker's family in 1890, so in 1903 he was essentially carrying on the family business. (The Kirkpatricks and the Grubbs had been cousin families before this). Mr Grubb had 1 son and three

daughters – the son did not take on the business.

One of their sons, Robert Webster Kirkpatrick, (1890-1937) went on to co-found, with the Stevens family, Kirkpatrick & Stevens of Newmarket, and one of his sons in turn, Robert Noel Kirkpatrick, was a Newmarket Borough Councillor in the early 1970s. His daughter is Noeline Raffills, current Auckland City Councillor for Avondale-Roskill Ward. [Conversation with Mr Noel Kirkpatrick, 11 June 2001]

Mr Grubb senior continued to work for his son-in-law until his retirement.

Also on 1 April 1903 is the first mention in the Roads Board minutes of **St Georges Road** in place of the then Brickyards Road.

Oddfellows Lodge: On 30 September 1903, the Avondale Oddfellows Lodge opened and started meeting in the Avondale Public Hall. This was to continue until 19 December 1927, when their new purpose-built hall was opened further along St Georges Road (now demolished). They only had to shift out once, in 1923 (moved back 20/7/1923) when the Public Hall was being shifted to its current site to make room for the new Town Hall. [Conversation with Mr W E Timmins, Secretary of Oddfellows Lodge, 4 May 2001]

Once Avondale amalgamated with Auckland City, and the decision had been made to start a public library (1930-31), the Lodge were advised that they would no longer be allowed to use the Public Hall building for their meetings. In response, the Lodge built their own hall further down St Georges Road.

In October 1903, residents along Great North Road from Kirkpatrick's corner to Waterview petitioned the Road Board for a footpath along the road. The Board agreed to contribute £ for £.

1904

"A supply of gas from the Auckland Gas Works was piped into the central area of Avondale. It allowed some street lamps to be installed. A man was employed to light them at dusk and extinguish them at midnight." [Challenge of the Whau, p. 59]

Gas Lamp in the Village: *"In 1904 Mr A W Page offered to present the Road Board with an ornamental lamp. He suggested that it be mounted on a pedestal and surrounded by a drinking trough for horses. The Board accepted (the) site ... at the intersection of St Jude's Street, St George's Road, Wingate Street, and Great North Road. The structure was a feature of the area for a number of years."* [Challenge of the Whau, p. 59]

Actually the mini-saga of the gas lamp, pedestal and water trough at the junction of "Old North Road and New North Road" began 1 April 1903, when one John Wilson wrote to the Road Board complaining about a culvert near the Public Hall, and also suggesting a public water trough at the junction. The Board advised him that they had already moved on that notion – and *then* passed a motion "procuring a water trough for the village".

The Auckland Gas Company had been interviewed by the Road Board by May 1904, so the Board

reported to the annual ratepayer's meeting that year, and the AGC assured the Board that gas would be supplied to the village "as the necessary pipes were obtained."

By August 1904, 3 gas lamps had been purchased for the streets of the district, including one for the junction of "Old North and New North Roads."

At this point, A W Page *"having offered to present the Board with a ornamental lamp to be erected in the village and able to bear the cost of supplying water to a public trough, provided the Board erected a suitable pedestal and water trough."*

This was all well and good, with a subscription arranged to pay for the pedestal and trough – but water in those days came from Auckland City's Newton Reservoir, and the Road Board couldn't come to an arrangement with the City Council until sometime between 1907 and 1910. Board minutes are missing for this period, but photos of the junction from the time show the gas lamp above a trough before Allely's Building was erected in 1911. The gas lamp may well have been installed in 1904 or 1905, but the district's horses had to be patient when it came to the trough.

Those who had imbibed too much at the Avondale Hotel ran the risk of being thrown bodily into the trough to sober up, and then left under the shop verandahs. [Vic Amos recollection, Avondale Oral History Project, tape 15, 1991]

"As kids we used to sit on the old horse trough, where the traffic island now stands, and look after the horses of anyone going in [to the Avondale Hotel] to drink. If we

were lucky we would get a bob for it." [Remembrance of Mr. J McCrae, aged 77, *Western Leader*, 11/8/67]

The trough and lamp remained a landmark until around 1924, according to Heritage Planning consultant, Mike Butler.

Methodist Church: " ... in 1904 the Methodists opened their own church building in upper Rosebank Road, where the Nafanua Hall is today." [*Challenge of the Whau*, p. 100]

The first service had been held in Mt Albert at the home of Mr and Mrs A W Martin on **March 22 1903**. Later services were in the Public Hall at Avondale. "*On account of beer parties being held in the Hall of a Saturday night and beer spilt on the floor, Methodists had no alternative but to inhale the fumes of the night before [and] during their service.*" These conditions hurried on the building of a church. [Ruby Martin memories, from Avondale Methodist Church Diamond Jubilee Booklet, 1964]

It had been resolved on January 4th 1903 "*to erect a church 30ft. by 20ft. capable of seating 120 people. The estimated cost including the land was £326 and to complete this project it was deemed necessary to raise a loan of £200. A site for the church was purchased in May 1903 situated in what was then known as Brown Street, now Rosebank Road ... On April 7th 1904 the foundation stone or rather stones, for there were two of them, were laid, one by ... W Shackleford, and the other by ... Elijah Astley.*

"The opening of the church took place on May 22nd 1904." [Methodist Church Diamond Jubilee booklet, 1964]

"The church stands on a plot of ground between the Avondale Railway Station and the main road, and is of a size to seat 100 people. It has cost about £300 to erect. The arrival of this new church is another of the many signs of Avondale's rapid growth." [NZ Herald, 7/4/1904, from Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]

After World War I, the church hoped to have a new brick church built on the site to accommodate the increase in parishioners, and so moved the wooden church to the rear of the site. However, no new church was built (due to war and depression) until the Nafanua development later in the century.

In September 1904, Mr Binsted donated 5/- towards the cost of forming a footpath in **Blake Street**, outside his shop. [Road Board minutes].

Two former residents recalled being told that people from the Auckland Asylum near Pt Chevalier would walk from the asylum to the corner of Blake Street and Great North Road, sit on the grass outside Henry Binsted's shop for a while, then walk back to the asylum again. This would have happened before 1920.

1905

The problems of walking the streets at night, when there is next to no street lighting, is not one limited to our own times.

"An Avondale Sensation – Alleged assault on a Young Woman – An Arrest Made.

A young woman named Rose Thomas, aged 18, residing at

Avondale, was violently assaulted on Saturday night. She was walking along the main road, and when about 200 yards from the Avondale Hotel a young man rushed upon her out of the darkness, caught her by the throat, and making an improper suggestion threatened to blow her brains out with a revolver, which she said he held in his hand at the time.

“He then dragged her some yards off the main road and threw her into a ditch, where, it is alleged, he attempted to commit a serious offence, but was disturbed by some ladies who were walking along the main road at the time, and taking alarm, he ran away and was lost in the darkness.

“Miss Thomas made a complaint to a passer-by, and information of the assault was conveyed to Constable O’Grady, who is stationed at Avondale. He saw Miss Thomas, and gathered a description of her assailant from her. Yesterday Inspector Cullen received information of the arrest of a young man who resides at Avondale, who, Miss Thomas alleged, was the man who assaulted her. He will be brought up at the Police Court this morning.” [NZ Herald, 30/1/1905, from Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]

Shopping Hours by-law: *“The [Road] Board set local shopping hours. Businesses were required to be open on Saturday morning and closed on Wednesday afternoons. Billiard saloons were not allowed to be open after 10.30 at night. Before a licence was issued to a saloon operator, the Police Department was consulted.” [Challenge of the Whau, p. 53]*

Actually, the Road Board didn’t have by-laws regarding general shop hours, only for billiard rooms and other entertainment establishments. From 18 January 1905, clear through to the end of the Borough in 1927, Avondale’s Road Boards and Councils had to adhere to the **Shops and Offices Act 1904**, where each year a day was chosen on which, each week, shops in Avondale closed at 1pm. This was usually Wednesday, following the British pattern. This was a continuation on restrictions on work hours imposed earlier by the Shops and Shops Assistants Act of 1894. However, shops could and did open on Saturdays, and there was no deterrence to Sunday trading. This was reversed in by the Shops and Offices Act 1955, which banned Sunday Trading for all but a few exceptions, such as dairies.

In the early 1900s, health was of primary concern. Amidst the scares and horrific realities of plague and fevers, the Road Board took matters of public health seriously.

“The Chairman (T B Clay) stated that he had arranged for the District Health Officer and W Bruce (Baker?) to meet at Avondale to discuss the question of the drain, (outside the Avondale Hotel, continually blocking up), the latter gentleman failed to attend. The Health Officer had condemned the drain as insanitary, also the premises on Peck’s Estate, and had signified his intention to compel the owners of the Avondale Hotel to put in a septic tank.” It was suggested that this be done, and a stand of willows cut down, with Mrs. Peck’s permission. [minutes, 1/2/1905]

Trains in 1905 would stop across the Blake Street railway crossing, blocking traffic while waiting for the signal to proceed further down the track. The Road Board complained to the Railways Department about this, and the signals were moved. [minutes, 9/12/1905].

Land rates were now 1 1/3 d in the £. It was recommended in the 1907 annual meeting that these be lowered to 1 1/4 d in the £, and this was reduced to 1 1/12 d. After so long with rates at very low figures, the residents were very reluctant to see their rates bill rise.

1906

Police Station: The first purpose-built Avondale Police Station was erected, Great North Road, next to Page's Building, in 1906. Initially there were 3 separate buildings: constables residence & office (still standing), lockup and stable. The District Engineer of the time, in charge of the work, was C. R. Vickerman, while the builder was Robert Kay. Total cost was £740. Dressed timber for the buildings was supplied from Government mills at Kakahi. The land was purchased on 28/8/1903 in preparation for the building.

"I respectfully report that the section purchased by the Police Department at Avondale for Police Quarters would be very accommodating for Troop horse here by it being fenced, as the present stable yard where he runs when out of stable is very small and of no comfort." ["Report of Constable Thos. O'Grady, No. 649, relative to Police Station at Avondale suitable for Troop Horse accommodation by being fenced," 15/12/1903, National

Archives, from Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, 2001]

Mike Butler, in his report, remarked on the special significance of the Avondale Station as it is of comparatively rare wooden construction, in comparison with other suburban stations. [M Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

It was thought that the first police constable stationed in Avondale then was William McInnes in 1903, who used to ride regularly on horseback from Avondale to Helensville and back again. He apparently had two brothers, who owned Fencible cottages in Howick. [Conversation with Mrs Margaret Basset and Mrs Elaine Bollard, 31/5/2001]

However, according to Mike Butler, Constable Crean was the first (by 1900 – although he was the investigating constable in the Stych suicide incident in 1898). McInnes may have come after Crean, but before Constable Gordon (by January 1901, to whom Constable J Watt of Helensville reported), and Constable O'Grady who wrote the above report about the newly purchased station land. The question still remains as to where the constables were stationed at Avondale *before* 1906.

He may have been the "new constable" referred to in Road Board minutes of 7 October 1903, *"to co-operate with the ranger in prosecuting owners of straying horses and cattle."*

1907

Road Board Chairman T B Clay resigns on 1 May 1907, and is succeeded by John Potter.

1908

Railway: *"The motor train now running between Auckland and Henderson has proved so great a success that a second large carriage has had to be added in order to cope with the traffic. Credit is due to Mr John Bollard, MP, for his action in introducing the railway authorities to run a motor train on this suburban line."* [NZ Herald, 7/3/1908]

Closure of Avondale Hotel: Local Option (regarding liquor licence provision in districts) first held with General Election on 17 November 1908. Avondale was part of Eden district, which had 4 hotels at the time: Junction Hotel (Epsom), Epsom Hotel, Avondale Hotel and Henderson Hotel. The total Eden vote in 1908 was: No Licence 4010; Reduction 4015; Continuance 2192.

The narrow vote for reduction was probably overturned by later recount votes.

(In Avondale, the sole polling place for the election was the Public Hall on St Georges Rd. This would have included voters in Blockhouse Bay, Rosebank and Waterview. There, it was 402 for no licence, 385 for reduction, 261 for continuance.)

Closure for 107 hotels up and down the country, including the four in Eden district, was set for 10 pm, June 30 1909. The NZ Herald of

the time advised that both Avondale and St Heliers bars were to be put up for sale.

I had an interesting conversation with Mr Keith Grubb, who has lived in and around Avondale much of his life. He told me of some of the ways the prohibition of liquor in the district was circumvented. In the Cracroft St billiard saloon, for instance, imbibers would fill Coke bottles with spirits, so as to fool the police who regularly monitored that "den of iniquity".

Later, when restrictive licensing came into force, some joined sports clubs simply so they could enjoy their pint legally. According to Mr Grubb, the racecourse jockeys had their own secret bar under the grandstands at one time.

What could be the first record of the 2-storey stone building at 1990 Great North Road (now demolished, and the site of the latest Avondale Post Office) comes from an advertisement placed in the *NZ Herald* of 18 March 1909:

"Shops and stabling (brick & wood) at Avondale. Tenders for the above will be received until Noon Monday 29/3/1908. Arthur H White, Architect." [From M Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City 2001.]

Avondale goes dry at 10pm, 30 June 1909, and the Avondale Hotel loses its licence. It later becomes the **Avondale Post Office**.

"By 1912 the postal business had grown to sufficient proportions to justify a separate building, and on February 13 of that year the premises which had served for the past 26 years were occupied. They

had been acquired by the P. and T. Department and converted from a hotel, "no license" having been carried in the district, which was, at this time, part of the Eden electorate.

"A remarkable expansion had been recorded in the postal business since that date. The postmaster had been Mr Ernest D Thompson, appointed February 1912. Mr Charles B McIsaac, appointed December 10, 1921, Mr John Brookes, appointed June 10 1924, and Mr John G McGregor, the present postmaster, who was appointed April 29, 1929." [Speech by H. G. R. Mason, Minister of Justice, 19 August 1938.]

"The Hotel was made into the Post Office (1912). It was a beautiful looking place inside. All the counter was polished and done with brass – that must have been where the bar used to be. The Post Office was also the manual exchange." [Section of Avondale Oral Histories, 1990/1991]

Come general election day, a sheet would be hung from the hotel verandah facing the Page's Building, and the results as they came in to the post office would be posted up on the sheet for the crowds to see under the shop verandahs. [Conversation with Mrs V. Crawford, 28 June 2001]

"The Avondale Hotel's most popular period, from 1890 to 1910, is closely linked to the nearby racecourse and the various sporting activities carried out there." [Peter Buffet, *Western Leader*]

"[The Avondale Hotel] has been a wonderful landmark and continually brings back old memories – around 1902 there were only about seven

shops in Avondale and now I just wouldn't like to count them all." [J. McRae, aged 77, reminisces in *NZ Herald*, 11/8/67]

Billiard Saloon: According to *The Challenge of the Whau*, the old bakehouse behind what once was the Morris Bros. general store and post office was converted in 1908 into billiard rooms, using tables from the Avondale Hotel (after the 1908 election result made Avondale a "dry" area). A Mr H. Kneebone, Roads Board member and land developer in his own right, owned the billiard saloon for some years.

Public poolrooms started as a part of the entertainment in taverns and hotels, the Avondale Hotel obviously no exception. To while away the time between betting games (once known as "pool", as in today's sweepstake pools), including horse racing, drinkers would play games of billiards. Such rooms:

"were always associated with gambling and various forms of low life, ministers were always denouncing them, police were always finding wanted criminals in them, and parents were always warning their children to stay out of them. Here, for example, is Jerome Keogh, world's pool champion five times between 1897 and 1910, reminiscing about the 1890's:

'Despite the vaunted glamour of the great billiard academies of the gay nineties...the fact was that during this period "nice" young men stole surreptitiously through the by-ways of the night to enter them, lest detection should result in the stigma of being "fast."...The game

struggled against the dictates of society, the raising of eyebrows, and the word "pool" uttered with caustic venom." [from the Internet, www.amateurbilliardnews.com/Archives/pages/hustlers.html]

1910

Railway statistics: *"The Railway Statement of 1910 showed that the number of tickets issued from the Avondale Station exceeded that of any station in the Dominion, outside the largest towns. This did not include the race traffic. Nearly all were second-class tickets, showing that the district was essentially a residential quarter for working men."* [From evidence given Thursday September 2, 1915, in favour of Avondale becoming a borough, published in the *NZ Herald*, 3/9/1915]

Robertson's Store: *"On the north-west corner of Rosebank Road and Great North Roads, was a general store, opened about 1910. The first owner was a D Robertson. He expanded his business to include a bakery. The bakehouse was situated a little to the north along Great North Rd, about where Battersby's funeral parlour is now."* [Challenge of the Whau, p. 88]

The bakery would be the successor to Grubb's and Kirkpatrick's.

D Robertson's flourished until 1918-1919, when Thode Bros. took over the store. The business was already on the wane in 1915.

"To the residents of Avondale and surrounding district. Having taken over the Coal Business lately carried on by Mr D Robertson of Avondale I hope by strict attention to business and keeping coal of the best quality to merit a fair share of

the public patronage. T H Martin, Coal & Firewood Dealer, Avondale. Express Work done. Orders left at Mr Robertson's promptly attended to" [Advertisement, *The News*, 28/8/15]

The movies: Earliest found instance of a motion picture show in Avondale, from Jan Grefstad's unpublished book, *Picture Theatres of Auckland*:

"AVONDALE TONIGHT. PUBLIC HALL. Hope's Picture Company. They speak for themselves. Wonderful variety, suitable for Every Taste with catchy music. Prices 1/- and 6d. Doors open 7pm commencing 8pm; Children half price. TONIGHT (THURSDAY) ONLY." [*Auckland Star*, November 10 1910]



Allely's Building: (1994 – 2000 Great North Rd). In 1903, the land between Page's Building and the corner of Crayford St and Great North Road was part of a farm and stables connected with the Jockey Club.

In 1910 there was a wooden shop on the site, beside the police station. This was replaced by a brick building owned by Robert Joseph Alley, chemist, in 1911. An addition to the immediate north of it later became the site for chemists J Henderson (until 1980s) and Peace (1980s-1990s). [M Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

Robert Joseph Allely may have been born 1867, the son of immigrants from County Monaghan, Ireland, who had

moved to Australia, where Allely was born. [information found on the Internet, April 2001].

He was in business in Avondale possible only a little more than 10 years. But, after Dr Aitken in the previous century, he was Avondale's second source of general medical help, Avondale's "doctor" of the time, as well as the dentist.

Mrs V Crawford said that Robert Allely was a little child on the same ship on which her grandmother MacDonald came on, the *Queen of the Nations*. If you went to Allely for your teeth, he would take you upstairs (which was later the dental office for Mr Herdson and Mr Scott). [Conversation with Mrs V Crawford, 28 June 2001]

On **July 22 1911**, the first prescription is recorded as being filled, on the day the original pharmacy opened. [*Western Leader*, 28/9/87]

Traffic By-laws: 7 December – Roads Board By-laws in effect. These regulated vehicle traffic on Road District roads, referred to road obstructions and nuisances, and demanded the lighting of vehicles from sunset to sunrise. Vehicles plying for hire were licensed.

Building By-laws: There were building regulations, and a prohibition on buildings not having a frontage to a public or private road or street. There was also a ¼ acre minimum on subdivisions, to prevent conditions of overcrowding.

There were objections before these by-laws came into effect. A deputation was concerned that they would prove detrimental to district

progress, make sections too costly for the average worker, and nullify the drive for better rail service by making settlement difficult in the district. There were fears the Board's revenue would be decreased by the building restrictions. [Avondale Road Board minutes, 11/10/11]

1912

Footpath: "*Motion passed to form footpath on both sides of Great North Road from Blake St (St Judes) to Brown St (Rosebank Road).*" [Avondale Road Board minutes, 27/3/12]

Gas mains: Auckland Gas Company lays mains in Great North Rd and Brown Street. [Avondale Road Board minutes, 3/4/12]

Brown Street being constructed. Talk of Rosebank Road continuation. [Avondale Road Board minutes, 12/6/12]

Bluck block built 1912-1913 by Frederick Bluck – JP, Avondale orchardist, clerk of the Avondale Road Board, real estate agent, previously station master and storekeeper in Waitara, and teacher in South Auckland. He arrived in New Zealand 21 October 1866, aboard the *Ida Zeigler*, and came to Avondale by 1899. He built the block opposite the station on Browne Street to take advantage of the railway traffic, the principal mode of transport in and out of Avondale at the time. Bluck set up "Fred Bluck & Son" land agents in the block (previously located in Blake St – St Judes). His son Frederick Gordon Bluck died in 1917, while Bluck senior died in 1941, age 96. He had left Avondale

in 1926, and spent most of his retirement years in Balmoral.

The Bluck Buildings represent the old Avondale focal point prior to the widespread use of the motor car. On the outside, to this day, is an old metal “FP” plate, meaning “Fire Plug”.

[Mike Butler report, Historic Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

Station superette (corner Robertson and Browne St) built 1912. The ad for tenders for building the store appeared September 26, 1912. The architect was Hugh Grierson. Later, a second storey added (by 1913) as living quarters. Has been a grocers, drapers, dairy, and now art framers. [Mike Butler report, Historic Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

G J Philp ran the store in 1913, advertising (as seen on a photo of the period) “Merchant, Provisions, Grain and Produce” There was a sign outside, by the front entrance, “Summer drinks”. According to the photo, the second storey was already built in 1913.

According to Mr Noel Kirkpatrick, whose family owned the property up to the 1930s at least, at the back of the store was a “high door”, with a beam jutting straight out from the top for unloading the horse & cart delivering such items as bags of flour. There were stables at the back.

Vehicle licence plates cost 9d each.

Water trough: In April it was decided to erect a water trough “at the lamp in the village” (present day roundabout. This was the lamp donated by Arthur Page in 1904). It

was to be circular in shape, designed by Mr Watkins (based on trough in Papakura – water to be supplied by the Auckland City Council at 10/- per 1000 gallons), cost £45 (later cost possibly reduced to £25). Payment was to be by subscription, with £10 collected by October that year.

In 1913, a brass cup was fixed in place with a longer chain. This was arranged by Board member H Kneebone, who was later questioned over the disappearance of subscription monies for the trough, given to him but not appearing in the treasury.

It was realised later in 1913 that there was no meter for the trough, or a plug to drain it for cleaning. This was rectified.

The drinking trough was a heavy concrete one, around 15 feet in diameter. [Vic Amos recollection, Oral History tapes]

Billiard Saloon: H Kneebone’s billiard saloon licence passed to Edward Rule, and Kneebone left Avondale politics soon after. The licence was restored to Kneebone a year later.

Avondale’s Progress – Many Buildings Going Up

The march of population westward is responsible for many inquiring eyes being directed towards Avondale as a residential suburb. The comparative cheapness of land in this locality is an inducement to a closer settlement. At the present time houses are going up in all directions, and the provision adopted by the Road Board some months ago of framing building by-laws to prevent

allotments being cut up into lesser areas than 1/5 of an acre each will prevent any undue congestion.

The Walton Estate, beside the railway station, is being rapidly filled up with houses of a pleasing appearance. A large 2-storeyed shop and dwelling is being erected opposite the station gates, and in other portions of the township the same activity is being manifested.

A considerable portion of the recent loan of £15,500 for road formation has been expended, and at the moment the main thoroughfare is "up", the Board doing the work by day labour in preference to contracting, this apparently giving better results.

[NZ Herald, 18/11/1912, from Mike Butler Report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]

1913

Telephones: Clerk reports on telephone installation in Board's offices (Blake St, east corner with Geddes Tce, later called Mission Hall.) Annual charge for "four on wire" (or party line) installation 8 pounds to each subscriber. Messrs Binsted, Philp and Archibald Bros. willing to join with Board. [Avondale Road Board minutes, 5/3/13]

The Archibald Brothers were brickmakers of the time, and **G J Philp** ran the Station Store on the corner of Brown St and Robertson Road.

Board Offices: A charwoman cleaned the offices for 3/- per session, while a small lamp was obtained and fixed on the office over the entrance to be lighted on nights of Board meetings. [Avondale Road Board minutes, 1913].

The Village: Avondale, at this date, still referred to as a "village" or "township" in minutes. [Avondale Road Board minutes, 2/4/13]

Traffic by-laws: Avondale Roads Board starts to consider the regulation of motor car speed in the district.

Sometime in 1913-14, **Arthur John Morrish** (1869-1949) printed the first issue of his weekly publication for Avondale, New Lynn, Waikumete, Henderson, and Swanson, called simply **The News**. He had been originally apprenticed to the printing trade in England, working at *The Gazette* in Tiverton. He emigrated from Devon in 1894 when he was 25, married Adelaide Annie Dayner (whom he'd first met in Derby) and settled in Princess Street (Elm St), where he set up his business before shifting first to Great North Road (just down from the 1938 Post Office), and then to Rosebank Road. Copies of *The News* are rare, and photocopies sought after these days. No one knows when the newspaper ceased publication, but Arthur Morrish died in 1949, aged 80.

His wife Adelaide Annie Morrish (c.1871-1941) ran her own business in Rosebank Road alongside her husband's printing works.

1914

In 1914, a new Infant Block was built at the Primary School, at the Layard St entrance, apparently by a local, Mr Vibert.

10 June 1914: Board wrote to John Bollard & Committee stating that the Board were willing to take over **Public Hall**. (This was the wooden hall dating from 1867. John Bollard by this time, one year before his own death, was the sole trustee of the set-up deed).

1 July 1914: Letter received from J. Bollard, surviving Trustee of the Avondale Public Hall Trust Deed willing to hand over & vest the Hall in the Board, provided transfer can be made in legal manner, incidental expenses to be paid by the Board, enclosing original Trust Deed for information.

Town Clerk sent Bollard a "Statement of Facts" with a copy of the Deed and suggestion clause to be inserted in the Washing Up Bill validating the Vesting.

The caretaker of the hall (a Mr Lees) was kept on for 3 months, at £3 per quarter with extra 1/- per hour for cleaning up after late socials & dances & 6d each time for emptying the night soil bucket.

It was resolved that Mr Lees be supplied with a "book in diary form to enter Hall engagements."

1915

20 January 1915: "From Messrs Hammond & Cracknell (Solicitors) stating that the surviving Trustee had signed the deed of conveyance of **Avondale Public Hall** from the Trustees to the inhabitants of Avondale Road District, and that they would attend the meeting of the Board on January 10th inst. To complete transfer. On the motion of the Chairman it was unanimously resolved that the standing orders be suspended. That the common

seal if the Inhabitants of the Avondale Road District be affixed to the Transfer of the Avondale Public Hall and site, executed by Mr John Bollard the surviving Trustee thereof in pursuance of the authority conferred by Sec. 20 Subsection 1 of the Reserves And Other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act 1914: carried."

"That the Board take possession of the said hall under the former Trust Deed thereof and that Messrs John Potter (Chairman), F Walker & W J Tait form a committee to arrange & carry out the actual taking possession: carried."

22 January 1915: *"The Chairman said the principal business of the adjourned meeting was the matter of the Public Hall. Mr Fell asked if the names on the Deed formed the (Hall) Committee. The Chairman said not necessarily. Mr Curd suggested re-naming the Hall and calling it Avondale Town Hall. Some members considered this rather premature and the matter was not pressed."*

3 February 1915: "Report on Public Hall from Public Hall Committee"

Members: John Potter, George Curd, G Fell.

Interior sound. Supper room, ladies & gentlemen's rooms required repair & alterations. Outside of hall except spouting in good condition. Out-buildings, fences and general surroundings & water supply neglected. Seating accommodation inadequate, supper room tables need improvement. Piano in excellent order although wants cover. Crockery & utensils in the kitchen very fair."

“Repairs required: lean(-to) at back, outhouses, fences and sundry fixtures. Also plumbing, laying on of water from city main, levelling, tarring & sanding of vacant land.”

*“Recommend (aside from land work) that a **Brick Front** be built with 2 floors, rooms to be used as Municipal Chambers etc. A design kindly drawn up by George Curd has been submitted, but committee is of the opinion that for a work involving the spending of public money, it would be in accordance with best principles to consult an architect. £500 to be borrowed for work. Anticipated revenue to cover interest: no extra rates levy.”*

“Mr Walker suggested deferring the Brick Front for a time, to consider advisability of erecting the whole building in brick. Fell (one of the Hall Committee) did not consider Avondale in a position “at present” to support a building costing £2000 or more.”

Letter received from Avondale Ratepayers Association asking for account of amount of balance due for use of Public Hall.

17 February 1915: *“Letter from H Empson – re **hire of Hall for pictures**. Moved by Mr Tait & seconded by Mr Hampton that Clerk write & ascertain the requirements of territorials on Thursday evenings.”*

“Mr Curd reported that Mr Vibert who had been asked by the Public Hall Committee to submit plan for front of the Hall had returned draft plan, and stated that he considered it desirable he should decline to submit plan”

[Local people believe that it was Vibert who designed and built the Primer Block in Avondale Primary School, 1914 -- note]

3 March 1915: The following tenders for alterations to the Public Hall were opened (repairs)

Mr C F Eyre £127

Mr W J Little £118 10/-

Mr H Potter £93 13/-

Lowest tender accepted.

24 March 1915: *“The Public Hall Committee recommended Board accept plan marked (B) for the Brick Front to Public Hall, and that the Architect be instructed to call tenders and proceed with the work immediately.”*

Tait suggested deferring Brick Front till after election of new Board, because of “other liabilities incurred by the Board.” Amendment lost. In asking for the deferment, he felt that in 2 or 3 years time the district would be in better financial position to afford a complete brick building.

5 May 1915: There were 2 tenders for the brick addition to the front of the Public Hall, and Mr J Davis’ tender of £868 being the lowest it was accepted by the Board. Architect to arrange work.

7 July 1915: Letter from Messrs Holman & Moses, architects, stating that the new front being built to Public Hall was progressing satisfactorily.

16 October 1915: Gas lights in Public Hall in way of “Lauthorn” (Lantern?) showing pictures from officiating room.
(Likely, by now, the Brick Front is complete).

20 October 1915: *“Moved that Board move into new offices in Public Hall and that next meeting be held there.”*

3 November 1915: First Board meeting in Board Room, Town Hall. Letter from Messrs Holman & Moses – reporting that Mr Davis had completed his contract for the Town Hall and saying it would be kept in repair for 2 months. *[Which was interesting, as the Board found out, when trying the gas lamps to find themselves left in darkness. -- note]*

17 November 1915: Letter from Messrs Holman & Moses re “failure of gas lights in the Board Room on the occasion of Board’s meeting.” Board had asked for “failure” to be put right at once.

Board to sell land and old Blake Street offices. (This may have been the old Mission Hall, only demolished by Auckland City in the 1960s. If so, this was not sold, but used in the early 1920s as a turncock’s office.)

1 December 1915: Letter from Holman & Moses re: instalment on Hall contract explaining position and when contract was completed. Chairman stated that on receipt of letter a cheque was signed for amount certified to Mr J Davis, the builder.

15 December 1915: Mr Empson asks permission to show pictures in the Town Hall on Christmas Day. Also applies for sole right to show pictures there.

In 1916 he applies to install 4 electric lights in the hall (these

would have been a first for Avondale) to save lighting gas when performances were over. Also said he’s give £1 towards the lamp in front of the Hall, and give entertainments for the Hall clock fund. Road’s Board gives him 2 year lease. [Avondale Roads Board minutes, 16/2/16].

Empson’s picture shows were every Tuesday and Saturday evening in the Town Hall. From this point on, movies were to be a fixture at the Town Hall, right up to the present day.

2 February 1916: Letter from Mr J Davis enclosing architect’s certificate for balance of Hall contract account. Amount paid: £38.41.0

16 February 1916: Board paid Holman and Moses Architects £45 fee.

Mrs V Crawford recalled how a Mr Bassett would come out to Avondale from Burleigh St, Mt Eden, to teach the waltz in the old wooden Town Hall. She remembered clearly the 1-2-3-waltz time to the dance, at 1/- per lesson. Crowds would go there, and quite a lot of balls took place there in the hall. [Conversation with Mrs V. Crawford, 28 June 2001]

First bank: BNZ opened an agency on 26 May 1915, in the Bluck Building, as a receiving office only. It later closed on 13 June 1917.

The Road Board later petitioned in 1920 for this to be extended to a full branch of the bank. [Mike Butler report, Historic Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

(BNZ apparently opened and closed five times between 1915 and present day. One location was at the end of the Greys building opposite Battersby's).

Borough commission: On September 2, 1915, the Road Board appeared before an Internal Affairs Commission, seeking to be made a Borough so that Avondale's authority could go ahead with a plan for water reticulation without having to seek ratepayer approval. However, on 8 October, the Minister of Internal Affairs notified the Avondale Road Board that no further action would be taken *"in regard to the petition to have the Road Board of Avondale constituted a borough. The commission made the following recommendations – 'Having heard and carefully considered the evidence brought before us by the petitioners and other [these were the 19 ratepayers opposed], and having examined the said area, we are of the opinion that it is not at present suitable for municipal control.'"* [NZ Herald, 9/10/1915]

Bluck's Building: Other business in the block: CM Thorne, bootmaker; Allen M Hume, solicitor, and Bluck land agents. [Mike Butler report, Historic Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

Ernest Goodman – a shopkeeper who moved with the times. His business, at 1972 Great North Rd (near Triggs Garage) flourished from around 1915 to World War II.

"E Goodman, Avondale – confectioner & newsagent. I have increased the stock of books in my Lending Library department and now have a good collection for readers to choose from. I intend to

specialise in this branch and shall be constantly adding thereto."
[Advertisement, *The News*, 28/8/15]

It cost 1/- to join Mr Goodman's Lending Library, one of the stopgaps the businesses of Avondale provided in the days when the town had no public library.

But Mr Goodman didn't specialise in books for long.

By 1919 he was up with the play as far as the motor car was concerned.

"Avondale to the Beaches by Motor – E Goodman wishes to notify the public of Avondale that he is prepared to convey parties to Blockhouse Bay, Point Chevalier etc. by motor at times to suit customers. Fares as per arrangement. A trip will run daily from Avondale to Mt Albert at 10.0 a.m. Fare 6d, leaving Thode's corner." [Advertisement, *The News*, 29/3/19]

From then on, Mr Goodman's taxis became part of the Avondale landscape.

"J Blomley – Motor & General Engineer – Bring your cars, motor cycles, or other mechanical work to the above, where you will receive every attention, good workmanship and prompt delivery at rock bottom prices. All work guaranteed. Workshop & garages, adjoining Wm. Pendlebury's, Draper, Great North Road, Avondale."
[Advertisement, *The News*, 28/8/15]

Which would put the site of Blomley's business right next to Trigg & Danes, coachbuilders. It is possible that Blomley's was absorbed into the later Trigg's Garage.

Carriers: Two carriers advertised in 1915. R M Hooker along Rosebank Road offered “Furniture carefully removed, moderate charges.”

And W Cockerill, General Carrier, took over the business of the late J Thomas. [*The News*, 27/3/15]

Transport: City to Mt Albert tram service begins, 1/9/15 [*NZ Herald*]

“From about 1915,,, horse buses serving Avondale had been replaced by motor buses. Mostly these were fairly small vehicles, carrying about fifteen people.”
[*Challenge of the Whau*, p. 71]

Traffic by-laws: Motor traffic in this period a concern to the Roads Board. Slower traffic often overtaken. Board largely adopted AA rules.

Bluck’s Building: Opposite Avondale Station was Avondale Boot Factory [*The News*, c.1915]

The “Avondale” Tunnellers: On 22 September, 1915, Avondale Racecourse was chosen by the Ministry of Defence as the site for the training camp for the NZ Tunnellers Corps of Engineers. By October, the camp was installed, and the men started their training, lasting to December, in the ways of military discipline.

The local legends of tunnels dug under the racecourse at this time are exactly that – legends. But the Tunnellers provided a boost to the local businesses, and even sparked off a short-lived sly grog shop.

In August 1915, a Harry Turnbull came to Avondale and set up a fish shop here. He later told a court (in October) that a “friend” of his had complained of the difficulty keeping beer and whisky in the camp, so Turnbull decided to supply liquor from his shop to the soldiers. He claimed that he didn’t wish to take any money from them for the alcohol, but they insisted.

He also claimed that he didn’t have much liquor in his shop, but police found that, in fact, “his shop was fitted up like a miniature bar, with glasses on the counter and in the back room.” The police found “a number of empty beer and whisky bottles strewn about.” He was convicted and sentenced to one month’s hard labour – oddly enough, not for being without a licence, but for selling liquor to uniformed members of the Expeditionary Force. [*Auckland Star*, 22 October 1915, p. 2; *NZ Herald*, 10 November 1915, p. 9; *The “Avondale” Tunnellers Company*, L. J. Truttman, 2002, p. 2-6.]

1916

Harry Empson was given permission to use the Town Hall for exhibiting his motion pictures for two years. *“He used to bring a generator and his projection equipment on the back of a horse drawn cart. This was a petrol driven generator to provide and supply the current to make the projector run and to operate electric lights which were easier than turning on and off the gas lamps already installed in the hall.”* [Jan Grefstad, from his unpublished *Picture Theatres in Auckland*]

Fire: £5 reward will be given to anyone who can give information

which will lead to the conviction of the

person or persons who endeavoured to set fire to the premises of Messrs. Myers & Son in Blake St, Avondale, on or about December 24th last. (A Parsons Boarding house, just up the road, burned to the ground around the same period.) [*The (Avondale) News*, 15/1/16]

Public Toilets: Roads Board ask to take over “public convenience” from Chief Postmaster, in Avondale. (This would have been in the old Avondale Hotel building. The Avondale Postmaster later refuses). [Avondale Roads Board minutes, 21/6/16]

Blacksmith’s shop [Perry’s Avondale Shoeing Forge] on Gt North Rd being built, entrance at Geddes Tce [Avondale Road Board minutes, 5/4/16] This could have become Trigg’s garage [by 1920s], later Avondale Auction House and Avondale Spiders.

“Before you let your gig or trap go too far, run along to W.B. Perry. He’s the cheapest and the best – yes, by far – Wheelwright, Coachbuilder, Agricultural, Shoeing and General Smith.” [Advertisement in *The News*, 11/11/1916]

Thomas Myers (c.1881–1967), the blacksmith in Blake Street was the rival:

“Since we commenced business in Avondale we have built over one hundred carts and sulkies for the district.; We guarantee you better value than you can get elsewhere. Horse Shoeing, Ploughs made to order. All Kinds of Agricultural Implements Repaired.” [Advertisement in *The News*, 11/11/1916.

Both examples from *Challenge of the Whau*, p. 73]

His father William Myers came to New Zealand c.1895, starting up the family blacksmith business in Avondale, while living in Avondale South (according to William’s grandson, Roger Myers, the family were the first ones on what was to become Myers Rd, later Margate St).

Thomas Myers went into the business with his father in 1908, and remained in business there until 1962-63. During that time, the original building was cut down, and part leased.

“I started work with my father, the blacksmith William Myers, in 1908. I had served my apprenticeship with Hughes and Donger in Eden Terrace.

“We did a lot of work then for Charlie Pooley, who was the contractor.

“There was always plenty of work at our smithy. I started work at 7.30 in the morning and we worked long hours especially in the summer.” [From *Memories of early Avondale*, by Tom Myers, *Avondale Advance*, 21/11/1960]

Myers’ was more than simply a farrier (Thomas wouldn’t do a lot of work for the Jockey Club, his son Roger told me, as he considered thoroughbreds as “too flighty, a young man’s job”) – he also did a lot of work for market gardeners, both in Avondale and as far afield as Oratia and Henderson. He’d do repairs to plows, disks, harrows. Farmers would bring up to the shed 3 or 4 spades at a time, to have handles repaired. Thomas Myers also made up wheelbarrows.

He also worked for Odlins timber at Karekare, a day's work shoeing 8 to 10 horses.

As a wheelwright, he would repair wagons, virtually anything that could be drawn by animals, so his son says, including drays and milk vendors carts.

Roger Myers described to me how wheel rims were replaced. In the days of harsh roads, cart wheels were rimmed in steel, that was forged at the local blacksmith's.

The wheel was first dismantled, leaving only the hub, then completely re-spoked. The wheel would then be dropped into a hole dug in the ground to lie flat. The steel rim was then made up, and dropped into the hole around the wheel while still hot, then cold water was poured into the hole to shrink the metal snugly around the wheel, and to stop the wood burning. His son would ask Thomas Myers how he knew that the steel rim would fit every time. The answer, with a tap to the head, was simply, "Ah, son ...!" [Conversation with Roger Myers, 28 June 2001]

Population: The increase in population of Avondale according to the census returns is only 301 since the taking of the previous census. The population is now given as 2404. It has doubled itself in 10 years. [Note: this was likely the total population for Avondale, Waterview and Blockhouse Bay – *The News*, 11/11/16]

Home businesses: Sam Coulter, "Motor Mechanic and Bicycle Repairer" was advertising his

services. "Premises open every evening, orders may be left during the day at W Perry's, blacksmith, opposite." [News, 11 November 1916]

Around this time, **Trigg & Danes, Coachbuilders** set up business at 1980 Great North Road. **Charles Alfred Trigg**, according to one of his grand-children, was originally a bicycle repairer, with a side-speciality in sign writing. By 1920, the business was under Trigg's sole name, and by 1926, he had a motor garage. [Conversation with Mrs Marie Birch, 26/5/2001]

In 1916, the **Syers family** came to Avondale, and ultimately took residence along Great North Road (part of the land now the present sites of the Tahals Service Station and Avondale Community Centre). Mr Syers worked on the railway, and was in charge of the lines from Avondale to Henderson until 1931 when he was made redundant. At that time, he started a small nursery and grew plants.

Mrs V Crawford, daughter of Mr Syers, recalls how watercress grew at the bottom of Leslie Avenue (now Racecourse Parade), and how one of her brothers, thinking that the watercress was as good as that up north at Hoteo where Mr Syers was once based, picked some and ate it – only to be poisoned by it and sick for some time. (This may have been due to pollution from tanneries upstream.)

Down Leslie Avenue lived a man who had a horse and cart (and later an old truck) which he would drive down to Pollen Island to collect shells, then burn them and sell the remains for lime. He was called "Shellback Row" by the locals –

and no one knew where he burned the shells.

Across from the Syers' first house on Leslie Ave lived the Mitchells who had property extending up to Great North Road, along which grew their quince trees. This was later subdivided for State Housing, and even later, the Shoprite / Three Guys development.

[Conversation with Mrs V Crawford, June 28 2001]

Binsted butchers: Binsted's butcher shop burned down (December 1917) and rebuilt. [Western Leader, 2/5/67]. Internal tiling was done by Peter Collins, grandfather of Audrey Binsted. [Binsted Family history notes.]

"Early on Sunday morning last Mrs. Scott noticed flames coming from the rear of Messrs. H and J Binsted's butcher's shop in Avondale. A short time afterwards the whole premises were well ablaze and it was soon seen that what has been a landmark of the township for very many years was doomed, for there was no water supply available. The Mount Albert fire brigade came out but under the circumstances could do nothing and in a comparatively short time the only thing left standing was the brick chimney. A few small items were saved but the flames spread too quickly to allow of much being done. There is a certain amount of insurance on the building and working plant but nothing nearly sufficient to make up the loss.

"During the day other premises across the road were made available and on Monday morning business was conducted as usual.

"It was only a few days since that Mr Binsted had had the premises repainted and generally smartened up for 'Xmas.

"There is absolutely nothing to account for the outbreak. Mr. Binsted had a look round the last thing on Saturday night and everything appeared safe. Between 12 and 1 on Sunday morning Constable Smith was round the block and there was no sign of fire and this fire will only add to the already lengthy list of unsolved mysterious outbreaks." [The News, December 1917, from the "Harry March Memories" collection, courtesy of Ray Kealey, Blockhouse Bay History Group]

1918

Masonic Lodge: The Titirangi Lodge of the Freemasons formed 1912/14. In June 1918, the Lodge purchased a stable on Rosebank Road (later 69 Rosebank) from Mr Thode for £375. This became the Masonic Lodge. [Mike Butler report, 2001, for Heritage Planning, Auckland City]

1918-19

In 1917 ... the nearest doctor (to Henderson) was in Avondale. [Tracks and Trains Through Henderson, by David Lowe]

This man was not a 'doctor' as such: it was then Robert J Allely, the doctor/dentist/chemist.

Influenza epidemic: The Spanish Influenza epidemic struck New Zealand from 1918 to 1919. In Blockhouse Bay – A Village within a Town, Bruce McLaughlan included a passage with describes part of what the epidemic was like for local residents:

Bob and Vera Blake were both attending school at the time of the influenza epidemic of 1918. A hospital was set up at Avondale racecourse and the local chemist of Avondale, a Mr Allely, ran it. Bob said of the epidemic:

"People would go in and say, 'Haven't seen old Bill Brown about lately.' So one of them'd take off and go down and they'd find old Bill Brown either dead in his hut or so ill that he couldn't get out. And they'd get a cart and get him off to the hospital." [From M Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City, 2001]

Robert Joseph Allely was recognised for his part during the epidemic.

"PRESENTATION AT AVONDALE. On Wednesday January 22 1919 a crowded gathering assembled in the Avondale Town Hall on the occasion of the presentation of an illuminated address to Mr. R.J. Alley [sic], subscribed for by the residents of Avondale in consideration of the splendid work done by Mr. Alley during the late epidemic.

"Mr. R. B. Nesbitt, chairman of the Road Board said he was proud to be presiding at such a function, proud to be a friend and fellow citizen of a man who, through his untiring and unselfish labour had done so much for the sufferers of the disastrous epidemic. Towards the latter part of the visitation, Mr. Alley finally collapsed and had to take to his bed and it was with great difficulty his wife kept him there, for he wanted to be up and doing. In addition to the illuminated

address, Mr. Nesbitt presented to Mr. Alley a souvenir booklet containing the names of all the subscribers; also a gold watch chain and pendent; and to Mrs. Alley who had so well and faithfully assisted her husband, a beautiful case of silver knives and forks. Mr Alley in responding, said he felt very grateful that his endeavours had been the means of saving sorrow to many households.

"Hearty cheers were given for Mr. & Mrs. Alley and the singing of the National Anthem closed the proceedings."

[Auckland Star, 23/1/1919; from Picture Theatres of Auckland]

The motor car was starting to change the way Avondale people did business by this time. There was already the **Goodman Taxis** staring up, an **Avondale Motor Delivery Service**.

"Notice is hereby given that a quick Motor Delivery Service between Avondale and Auckland will be started from about April 7th, when necessary trips will be made twice daily. Passenger traffic to bays, picnics etc. will also be catered for, accommodation being provided for 15 passengers. Norman Thomas, Great North Rd, Avondale."
[Advertisement, The News, 29/3/19]

Mechanics: Wherever the motor car went, you needed the people to fix them.

"Machinery owners and users of motor cars have often felt the want of a local engineering establishment when necessity has arisen for repairs. It is therefore pleasing to record that Messrs. P J Cooper & Sons will in a few days open those premises adjoining the

new Masonic Hall, Rosebank Road, Avondale (just below Messrs. Thode Bros' store) as a general engineering shop. We have every confidence in soliciting work for the new firm as we know Mr Cooper has had an extended experience in all branches of engineering, including motors, mill machinery, suction gas plants and steam, gas and oil engines. Repairs to agricultural and milking machinery will also be a speciality with the new firm." [The News, 28/8/19]

This was at 79 Rosebank Road. Unfortunately, the optimism in the above piece didn't keep the business going beyond the middle of the 1920s, with the rise of Triggs Garage and Stuarts, both on the main road

The site between the intersection and the Masonic Hall would be vacant until **Forsyth's Coal Yard** in the 1930s.

In 1919, one Harry Waygood returned to New Zealand after serving in the Royal Australian airforce as a flight engineer during World War I, and built himself a motor garage on Windsor Road, Avondale (Wingate Street). **Waygood's Garage** was among the first to start selling petrol (in the early days, coming in three colours – blue, green and clear – depending on the petrol ratings). Imported petrol came to the retailer in 4 gallon cans until 1926.

His garage was open on Saturday mornings, and Harry Waygood quickly earned the reputation of being very good with his hands, using the expertise he'd learned during the Great War, along with

possessing a "ticket" to handle steam engines. His father had been a teacher at the New Lynn School.

His son Ron Waygood told me how his father had the Western agency in the 1930s for the Morris 8 type of motor car from Dominion motors in the City, and also taught people how to drive – so they could buy his cars.

Harry Waygood met his future wife, Elsie Binsted, while he was choirmaster, and she the organist at St Jude's Church, Avondale.

He continued to operate his garage until World War II, when petrol rationing meant keeping his garage open became uneconomical. He went on to work in Parnell until he retired.

[Conversation with Ron Waygood, 5 June 2001]

1920s

"In 1920, Mr Jenkins said, Avondale was split into three. There was a group of shops at the railway, another in the present shopping area and the main centre was at the junction of Great North Rd, St George Rd, St Jude's St and Wingate St. This was Avondale – a grocer's shop, a post office and a town hall.

"It was a real sleepy hollow where dogs could safely sleep in the middle of the road without disturbance from traffic or people.

"The only exit from Avondale in those days was by train which ran to Auckland and took passengers to the back of the Central Post Office, where the main Auckland station was situated." [Mount Albert and Pt Chevalier News, 16/12/1963]

The police were very friendly in those days, Mrs V. Crawford recalled. A Mr Horan was the constable when her brother let off a stink bomb in the Town Hall cinema. Constable Horan made young Master Syers pen an apology to the cinema manager at the police station. [Conversation with Mrs V Crawford, 28 June 2001]

The barber shop and billiard saloon on the corner of Cracroft Street and Great North Road, started by **Harry Kneebone** prior to World War I, then continued by **George McArthur** during the war (he was the official barber to the Tunneller's Camp on the Avondale Racecourse in late 1915), was run by **Lawrence Tierney** from just before the start of the 1920s. While the billiard saloon was gone from that site by 1932, Tierney's hairdressing salon continued until just after World War II (then run by William Coyle until the mid 1950s, Jack Reynolds until the 1960s, Jack Carr into the 1970s, until the site became an Uncle's takeaway bar).

It is Tierney's where locals recall great long shearing devices for hair trimming, looking for all the world like the long mechanical shears used on sheep. Also, here sometime during the 1930s, a visiting hypnotist put a man in a trance, and the subject sat for a day in the front window of Tierney's shop, a magnet of interest for the local children running down the road from school to see the unusual sight.

The Tierney family are held to have been of small stature, some becoming jockeys.

Also by 1920, Arthur H Spragg had a fruiterers/confectioners shop in the Allely Building, 1994 Great North Road. The shop is recalled with some affection by the locals of Avondale, and he was in business there until the late 1940s.

According to Mrs Margaret Bassett, Mr Spragg's had a "little wooden shop, which you had to step up to get into." He was one of the then-generation of Avondale businessmen who delivered to customer's homes.

Building by-laws: *"In 1920, [the Road Board] determined that all shops, garages and factories in the district were to be constructed of brick."* [Challenge of the Whau, p. 54]

Service Stations: *"During the 1920s a number of commercial garages were established in the district.... Stewart's, Trigg's, In St Jude's Street was Bamford's Avondale Service Station. A 1926 Automobile Association guide stated that: 'This garage is situated below the railway crossing on the hill above Avondale on the road to Mt Albert. Watch out for trains.'"* [Challenge of the Whau, p. 74]

Cecil Hastings Herdson, Avondale's first true dentist, took up his business in the upper level offices in Allely's Building in the early 1920s (there by 1925). As with many businesses in Avondale in those days, Herdson has left his share of local legends and lore, including the often reported one where his gundog, on losing all his teeth in a hunting accident, was duly fitted with a complete set by Herdson made entirely of gold.

By 1937, the business was run by **William E Scott**, who former schoolchildren remember having to see for their dental appointments when procedures required more than a dental nurse's care.

By 1966, these offices became the site for the **Avondale Dental Laboratory**, and the dental practice had moved slightly north to offices above in the new shopping block above Victor Gowns, Avondale Florist and Mercers, at 1962-1966 Great North Road. The practice was now run by **James L Walker**.

The steps leading up to Walker's were, to me as a child, steep and foreboding. Once, when I had to have some dental work done involving "putting me out with gas", I woke up in the offices with my mother beside me calling my name to bring me around – and then, still woozy, make my way down those stairs which seemed so impossibly difficult to negotiate without assistance. Probably the reason I don't like the insecurity of going down steep stairs or slopes to this day.

Avondale Bakeries:

The business of baking at the north-western corner of Rosebank Road and Great North Road had lasted since 1894 (Grubb's bakery) through 1903-1905 (R. S. Kirkpatrick's bakery), c.1910–c.1919 (D Robertson's bakery & store), to c.1919–c.1922 (Ernest James Bright).

Around 1922, Samuel Gibson bought the business, then at 1863 Great North Road. Around this time, the **Fearon Brothers** were erecting their new building on that

corner land, and Gibson's Bakery became part of the block, still at #1863. He was proprietor there until c.1927, when Henry Percy Burton took over, moved the business to 1857 Great North Road, out of the Fearon Buildings, and built the ovens and driveway that continued to exist until 1947 when purchased by W R Battersby, the undertaker.

According to some locals, Sam Gibson returned after the mid-1930s, and ran the Avondale Bakeries (which was one of the businesses apparently "taken over" by the American forces during World War II to make bread).

Mrs Bassett asked a granddaughter of Gibson about him. He was originally a biscuit maker by trade, had a family of 3 boys and 2 girls (the eldest girl was the mother of Sam Noall, a mayor of New Lynn from 1959 to 1965).

The family lived on Elm Street, with stables at the back of their house that they rented out (possibly the stables used by Albert Mason doing the bread deliveries).

Apparently, Gibson often let jockeys from the racecourse sit in the bakery's ovens to lose weight.

Sam Gibson, true to his roots, loved Scottish dancing, and it seems he died on the dance floor. [Conversation with Mrs Margaret Bassett, 31 May 2001].

Avondale's most enduring symbol, the **Avondale Spider**, is a type of Australian huntsman spider which arrived sometime in the early 1920s. *Challenge of the Whau* (p. 109) suggests that they originated from a load of railway sleepers.

Most stories tell of how they first came to Avondale from the railway station, and appeared behind **R & W Hellabys**.

This last point could fit in with another possible source of the spiders – Australian hardwood brought in by the Roads Board and the Borough Council for street signs. This would have been stored in the depot behind the butchers shop.

“A butcher reported that he worked in Hellaby’s butchers shop in Avondale during the 1920s. The firm took delivery of a large crate containing a gas refrigerator, and the butchers believed that the Avondale spiders came to New Zealand from Australia in that crate.

“They were often found keeping warm near the machinery which ran the refrigeration plant. A dollop of mince would be left for them to feed on, and when the shop was closed and empty, the spiders would eat bugs and flies, so the butchers were quite pleased.

“The spiders appeared to be harmless, but would make a spitting noise if startled. In the 1930s, Hellaby’s pulled down those premises and so the spiders had to find other homes.

Other sources say they came to New Zealand in timber. They’ve never become quite the nuisance that the possums and the rabbits have, but since about 1920 the Avondale spider has become a local oddity.” [Day by Day, by Max Cryer, 1998]

1920

W Alexander Macferson had a second-hand dealer licence approved with a “favourable police report” by the Avondale Road Board. During 1920s he operated a furniture dealers shop from the Bluck building along with Geoffrey Shaw, fruiter, Elisha Hale, grocer and Thomas Samuel, land agent, who had taken over Bluck’s business.

Macferson’s “workingman’s” cottage is presently still in existence, at the northern corner of Crayford St and Layard St.

He later moved his business to the corner of Crayford Street and Great North Road. [Mike Butler report, Heritage Planning, Auckland City Council, 2001]

The “Official Turning of the Valve” at Nihotapu, directing water for the first time to Auckland, was on **20 December 1920**. The Avondale Road Board members were invited along by Auckland City Council. In 1921, Auckland City agreed to supply water to Avondale at 1/- per 1000 gallons. [Avondale Roads Board minutes, November 1920 and 16/2/21]

The “turncock” worked for the Road’s Board, and later the Borough Council, maintaining the district’s water mains and pipes, metering residents, and literally “turning the cocks on and off”. At the beginning, the turncock set up his equipment in the old Roads Board Hall on Blake St, until it was used as a dental clinic and meeting hall.

The **Avondale Progressive League** asked if they could use the

Blake St Mission Hall (old Roads Board building) for “league meetings, club room, and library. The Mayor advised the League that as the Hall was being used as a workshop in connection with the waterworks, it couldn’t be used for the League’s purposes. [Borough Council minutes, 19/7/22]

In 1920, James Binsted died. The Avondale shop was sold to R&W Hellaby’s for £3090, and from then onwards, James’ son John Claude Binsted became manager of the Avondale R & W Hellaby’s shop. [Binsted family history notes].

Also in 1920, the Croft family came to the district, **Mr Ernest Croft**, senior (1880-1967), taking a house in Waterview. Three years later the family moved to the corner of Riversdale and Rosebank road. Their house, according to Mr Croft’s son Ernie, was one which had belonged to the Bollards.

Mr Croft was on the Avondale Borough Council from 1924 to 1927. [Conversation with Mr E Croft (son), 19 July 2001]

1921

St Georges Road: In 1921, the road was formed and metalled. “A row of *macrocarpas* that had adorned [the Presbyterian Church’s] side of the property had to be removed as the roots grew across the roadway (earlier pine trees had been removed in 1910).” [Our First Century, St Ninians centenary booklet, 1960]

Gas lights: Public gas lighting in Avondale was 26 half-lamps (cost 10/- each per annum) and 2 special lights at 1 pound each per annum. There were some problems with

some lights not working properly, or at all. The Roads Board pushed to have electricity come to Avondale. [Avondale Roads Board minutes, April 1921]

Promotion: A committee was set up composed of Messrs Tait, Haslam and Spargo to devise a system of advertising the District, and to interview the editors of the *Auckland Star* and the *Herald*. [Avondale Roads Board minutes, 3/6/21]

The Asylum: Avondale had problems, not only with its rural nature then, but unwelcome associations with the Lunatic Asylum just down the road at Pt Chevalier. In the nineteenth century, the media and public tended to call it the Whau Asylum – those going “to the Whau” were being committed for treatment. The change in 1882 to Avondale alleviated this, until the media began calling the Asylum the Avondale Mental Hospital. Both the Roads Board and the Borough Council rejected this utterly, once commenting on the confusion of folk coming for treatment, and ending up at Avondale Railway Station instead.

The official name for the Asylum was the Auckland Asylum. It later changed to Carrington, and Oakley (after the creek).

By **June 1921**, the **Fearon block** of shops had been built (NW Rosebank/Great North Rd intersection). From late 30s to 1969 this block included the Avondale branch of **Farmers Trading Co**. [Challenge of the Whau, p. 91]

The father of Charles and Len Fearon originally had a butchers shop in Ponsonby at the same time

as R & W Hellaby was starting up. According to Mr Murray Fearon, his grandson, Fearon had quite a number of hotels as customers on his books.

He met his wife in Ponsonby, and decided to come out to Avondale to live, marrying “down the Lane” on a property near where Reckitt & Colman would later be situated on Rosebank Road, on an 11 acre section. Murray Fearon recalled one of the trials of living on the Avondale Flats in those early days – his grandmother would open her back door, be swamped with flies which she would work to clear out of the house, only to get them all coming back in again when she opened the front door. Mr Fearon senior may still have kept up his shop in Ponsonby, as it is referred to still in 1922.

There were four sons: Charles Edgar (always called Jack), Len, Cedric, and one other who was lost to the Influenza Epidemic of 1918.

In 1920, Jack and Len started a butcher shop in Avondale, on the site which is now the Battersby carpark. The family had now moved to Station Road. Later, there was a fire which destroyed what had been the Thode Bros. store, then run by Mr MacKenzie. The Fearon brothers took over the land and remaining buildings, and built the Fearon Block by 1922.

In an advertisement from the *News* of **4 June 1921**, the **Fearon Bros.** butchers said they were in Avondale and Ponsonby. *“Patronise the Small Butcher -- No connection with the other Firm”*, and asked: *“Have you tried ‘Avon’ Sausages – made with specially*

prepared Sausage meal and clean fresh meat. ‘Avon’ Sausages are right”. They stocked “Prime Beef and Mutton, Dairy-fed Pork, Milk-fed Veal, Mild-cured Beef, Corned Pork and Ox Tongue. Our Quick-Lunch Pressed Beef is Delicious. Home-made Luncheon Sausage.”

“Avon Sausage” was apparently mixed in the Fearon’s own small factory they had built out the back the shop, using salt, pepper, mace and sage, although only a little of this was put in the mix. In those days, so Murray Fearon told me, a lot of solid bread was used.

In the shop itself were 2 big coolers (the second went in later than the first), a lot of marble benches, 2 butcher’s blocks, a corned beef tub, while the floor was concrete with sawdust scattered over it. Two big windows faced Great North Road, while one faced Rosebank Road. It was a walk down steps at back to the sausage and dripping factory.

Delivery of orders was initially by bike – with a meat basket attached. Murray Fearon recalls that if you fell off the bike at any stage, it was next to impossible to lift, being too heavy. Deliveries would go as far as all the way down the Avondale Flats. [Conversation with Mr Murray Fearon, 16 July 2001]

Mr Roger Myers recalls delivering meat for Jack Fearon by bike in the late 1930s. [Conversation with Mr Roger Myers, 28 June 2001]

Charles Edgar (“Jack”) Fearon ran the Avondale shop, while his brother Len ran a later one in Point Chevalier, after World War II. The Fearons sold the Avondale business in 1962. Eventually, the

block was bought by the proprietor of Avondale Printers.

Charles “Jack” Fearon (1880-1948) was a member of the Masonic Lodge, as well as a patron of the Avondale Municipal Orchestra, and a supporter of the Avondale Bowling Club.

Second Bank: In **August 1921**, the Roads Board requested to the manager of the Bank of New Zealand that a branch office be opened in Avondale. (The earlier one in Bluck’s Building had closed sometime earlier.)

In September, the BNZ replied that *“They are prepared to accede to Board’s request to open a branch office at Avondale provided they receive a requisition signed by a majority of the business people assuring them of their individual support and accounts.”* In December, after apparently receiving those assurances organised by Tait and the Board’s clerk, the BNZ wrote to the Board stating, *“it has been decided to open a branch office in Avondale on Mondays from 11.45 to 1 pm, Thursdays from 2 pm to 3.30 pm.”* The Board offered the bank hire of the Town Hall ante-room, at 1/- per week. Opening on 5 January 1922, the agency closed again from 21 August 1922. [Avondale Roads Board and Borough Council minutes, 21/8/22]

Amalgamation proposals: In **October 1921**, the Board received advice from the Town Clerk, Auckland City: “The conditions of the Avondale District in relation to the city are at present too disproportionate to warrant the Council further considering the proposed Amalgamation of that district with the City at present.” [Avondale Roads Board minutes, 6/10/21]

Sub-division by-laws: Also in **October 1921**, the Board received a letter from Messrs Blake & Burrell asking for information as to the requirements of the Board in the matter of subdivisions for shop sites. As the existing by-laws stated no subdivisions under ¼ acre and minimum 50 feet road frontage, the solicitors were asked for an opinion. Their response was that the Board’s by-law applied only to new dwellings, and not to shops. [Avondale Roads Board minutes]

